

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2374

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 5263

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, DR

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BALAGUER FREES 16 PRISONERS

1. IN HIS CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO THE NATION, PRESIDENT BALAGUER SAID HE HAD ORDERED 16 PERSONS RELEASED FROM PRISON AND HAD GRANTED PERMISSION TO "OTHER PERSONS" TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY WITH ALL NECESSARY GUARANTEES. HE DID NOT MAKE PUBLIC THE NAMES OF THOSE AFFECTED BY THE ORDERS.

2. THE NEWS MEDIA REPORTED THAT ALL 16 PRISONERS BENEFITTING FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ACTION WERE MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE ABORTIVE WESSIN Y WESSIN COUP IN 1971. THE 14 NAMES OBTAINED BY REPORTERS INCLUDED THOSE OF A CAPTAIN, A LIEUTENANT, THREE SERGEANTS AND NINE ENLISTED MEN, SERVING PRISON TERMS OF AS MUCH AS TEN YEARS.

3. THERE CONTINUED TO BE MUCH SPECULATION AS TO IDENTITIES OF THOSE WHOSE REQUESTS FOR EXPATRIATION HAD BEEN APPROVED. HOWEVER, THE PRESIDENT MADE IT CLEAR IN HIS SPEECH THAT, IN KEEPING WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S PRACTICE SINCE 1966, NO PERSON WHO WAS CONVICTED OF ACTS OF TERRORISM, WHO HAD ENGAGED IN CONTRABAND OR HAD TAKEN ANOTHER'S LIFE WOULD BE FREED.

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Message Attributes

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